



THE
JUDICIAL CAPACITY
OF THE
GENERAL CONVENTION
EXEMPLIFIED.

“ And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church.”—*Matt. xviii. 17.*

New-York :
J. P. PRALL, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER,
No. 9 SPRUCE STREET.
1857.

1560 / 3490.



To My Brethren in the New Church.

This pamphlet contains a full and accurate account of a matter which was forced upon the General Convention, in 1854, by the action of its Executive Committee, and which has since obtained some notoriety through the publication, in the Convention's organs, of two reports, both of which are singularly at variance with the facts and evidence in the case, and singularly unjust to innocent and aggrieved parties.

The pamphlet is designed exclusively for receivers of the doctrines of the New Church, and more especially, the members of the General Convention.

Copies will be sent, in the first instance, to the Rev. Thomas Wilks, and every member of the Executive Committee of the Convention; and I shall wait awhile—perhaps three or four weeks—to hear any suggestions which those gentlemen may have to offer in relation to the matter, before circulating the pamphlet more widely. I do this, because I prefer to err on the side of too great forbearance, rather than on the opposite side; and because I can conceive of one way—*only one*—in which those brethren may prevent the general circulation throughout the New Church, of the facts herein set forth.

In presenting the facts and evidence in this case in a printed form, I am not prompted by any personal feeling, nor by a wish to injure any one, but by the hope of adjusting, in some measure at least, a great wrong, to which the General Convention has now become a party, being itself involved in the wrong through its repeated efforts to shield the guilty.

If gross and cruel calumnies, when uttered by the friends of hierarchy against its opponents, are to be treated by organized bodies of men as venial offences, or no offences at all—are to be hushed up or altogether overlooked, and the calumniators elevated to offices of dignity in those bodies, then there is small hope for order, peace or quietness among brethren. When a single individual sides with the wrong, and pronounces the guilty innocent, it is sad enough. But how much more sad, to see a large and organized body of men ally itself with the wrong, and lend the weight of its influence to screen the guilty and condemn the guiltless.

I have many reasons for placing on record and in a readable form the facts and evidence in this case; but I shall give only a few of them.

1. First, it is a duty which I think I owe to myself. For the General Convention, through its Committee on the Journal, first gave publicity to this matter; and in its published report upon it, in 1855, I am virtually charged with having brought false accusations against one of the brethren, and with having otherwise offended, in this particular case, against the divine law. Let the candid reader judge whether I am justly amenable to any such charge.

2. Second, it is due, I think, to Mr. Wilks, that this statement should be given to the New Church public; for he will then have an occasion, and indeed will feel called upon, to make equally public the evidence which was deem-

ed sufficient by the Committees at Boston, and at Philadelphia, to destroy the united testimony of Mr. Miller, and Mr. Waldo, and to prove his own innocence;—evidence which I have repeatedly asked to be favored with, but hitherto without success. Several persons besides myself are in doubt about the adequacy of the evidence referred to, and it is due to Mr. Wilks, therefore, that he should have a good occasion for making that evidence public.

3. Then I believe, from conversation had with some of my Convention Brethren, that a very large portion of them labor still under a great mistake in regard to this whole affair;—some having been misled by the reports which have been privately circulated, and others quite as much by the published reports of the Convention. I think it is alike injurious to those brethren and to myself, that they should remain under the mistaken impression which they have imbibed, and which a plain statement of the facts, I think, would remove.

4. In the fourth place, this printed statement seems especially due to those excellent brethren, whose testimony in this case the verdict of the General Convention has pronounced worthless, and one of whom it has in substance adjudged guilty of perjury. So grave an offence as this, perpetrated by an organized body of men against private individuals of unblemished character, ought not, as it seems to me, to be passed over in silence. And having in my possession such evidence as I here present, I should not feel that I did right to allow it to slumber, and so let the Convention's wrong go unredressed.

5. Then the history of this affair, and the course pursued from the outset in relation to it, by those who hold the reins of government in the Convention, and thus shape all the proceedings of that Body, may possibly open the eyes of some persons to the mischiefs and dangers of such a hierarchy. It may show them something of its injustice and intolerance towards those who dissent from its policy, and its readiness to excuse or conceal the gravest misdemeanors in those who bow to its supremacy.

6. But should this pamphlet accomplish nothing else, I think it can hardly fail to convince every one who reads it of the utter incapacity of the General Convention to exercise the judicial function, and the utter folly of appealing to that body to settle a difficulty between brethren. Thus it may save others some perplexity, and perhaps disappointment, and will certainly secure the Convention against the possibility of ever again being troubled with a case of this sort. Such a verdict, when the testimony is duly considered, will, I feel sure, satisfy every sane man as to the *judicial* capacity of the General Convention. And the peremptory refusal of the Convention to allow me to tell to it the offence of one of its members, when respectfully solicited to do so, ought to make even its leaders see the glaring inconsistency between one of their acknowledged and fundamental rules of discipline, (Matt. xviii. 15–17,) and their practice in this instance. And for its own credit's sake, it is to be hoped that the Convention will hereafter abolish a rule of discipline, which it has itself so emphatically repudiated the first time its fidelity was put to the test.

ORANGE, MAY 27th, 1857.

B. F. BARRETT.

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THE JUDICIAL CAPACITY

OF THE

GENERAL CONVENTION EXEMPLIFIED.

At the meeting of the General Convention, in Portland, in 1854, its Executive Committee, of which the President was Chairman, reported the name of the Rev. Thomas Wilks, of New York, as one of the Assistant Editors of the New Jerusalem Magazine, then issued "under the sanction, patronage and direction of the General Convention." Up to this time Mr. Wilks had never belonged to the General Convention, and his name had never been reported in its list of officers or members. And, I had then in my possession, evidence which satisfied me, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Mr. Wilks had been guilty of a very grave misdemeanor, of which he had never, to my knowledge, exhibited any signs of repentance. The misdemeanor was one which seemed to me of so serious a character, that I thought it ought to disqualify him for the ministry, and even for church membership, unless heartily repented of. The President of the Convention knew, also, of the nature of this misdemeanor, for he had had a brief statement of the facts from my own lips not long after the trespass was committed. But the members of that Convention generally, as I had reason to believe, were entirely ignorant of the facts in regard to the misdemeanor of Mr. W. which had come to my knowledge.

I was not a little surprised—knowing what I had some time previous communicated to Mr. Worcester, in regard to the offence charged upon Mr. Wilks—that the name of this latter should have been reported to the Convention for one of its officers, by a Committee of which the President himself was Chairman. But having in my possession the facts and the evidence which I had, what was my duty, under the circumstances? Placing Mr. Wilks in office, was equivalent to making him a member of the Convention, though he had never joined that body in any orderly or constitutional way. Honestly believing that a man, who was capable of doing his brother so great a wrong, as the evidence in my possession showed Mr. W. to have done, was unworthy to be a member of any

church, until he had exhibited signs of sincere repentance, was it my duty to allow such a man to be foisted upon the Convention by the Executive Committee, and virtually made a member thereof, contrary to the provisions of its constitution? I thought not. I felt it to be my duty to protest against this arbitrary and unconstitutional method of making members of the Convention. But I did not wish to expose to the church at large the cruel wrong of which Mr. Wilks had been guilty. I therefore rose in my seat, and moved that the name of the Rev. Thomas Wilks be stricken from the list of names reported by the Executive Committee, on the ground that he was *not a member of the Convention*. This I deemed a good and valid objection, as it was a constitutional one. But it was not heeded. In spite of my earnest protest, based upon my constitutional rights, it was insisted that Mr. Wilks' name should be retained where the Executive Committee had placed it. Seeing that this just and constitutional objection was altogether unheeded by most of my brethren (though I had never before known an individual out of the Convention to be made an officer in that body, against the remonstrance of even a solitary member), I stated, with much reluctance, that I had other, and still stronger reasons, for asking that Mr. Wilks' name be stricken out, but that I did not wish to state those reasons publicly, before the Convention;—that I thought it most prudent, kind, and charitable, not to do so;—that I would willingly state them to the Executive Committee, or to any other committee whom the Convention might appoint, and they might judge of their validity. This most reasonable proposition—and one which, I think, ought to convince even the most prejudiced, how unwilling I was to give publicity to Mr. Wilks' offence, was not listened to. So far from it, I was charged with uncharitableness for even making such a proposition. It was, some said (and said in not the most kind or Christian temper), dealing in *innuendoes*. It was virtually insinuating that there was something about Mr. Wilks a little too bad to be made public. By such uncharitable remarks as these, and by the unreasonable and vehement opposition which my proposition to refer this matter to a committee met with, I was constrained to say in substance, "Well, since brethren are determined to bring Mr. Wilks into the Convention in this peculiar way, and contrary to my solemn protest, and since they refuse even to appoint a Committee to hear and consider my objections, and since I dislike innuendoes and like plain speaking, probably as much as any other person, I will say that my principal reason for objecting to Mr. Wilks' coming into this Convention, or being appointed to any office in it, is, that he has been guilty of a grave misdemeanor—a cruel slander—and one which has never been retracted nor acknowledged." Upon



this, I was called to order by the President, and signs of disapprobation were expressed by the Convention, such as were unbecoming a Christian assembly.

Now I can truly say, that in the course I pursued on that occasion, I acted as wisely and as prudently as I knew how. And from that day to this, I have not been able to see wherein I could have acted more wisely or discreetly than I did, and done my duty as a Christian, or as a member of the Convention. Spite of my earnest remonstrance, Mr. Wilks was retained in the office to which the Executive Committee had appointed him; for that Committee never suffer any of their doings to be reversed, and woe to the man who intimates that they ever should be reversed. But he was not then admitted, formally, into full membership. And it was voted—and the vote had my cordial concurrence—that nothing which had been said in Convention, in relation to this matter, should appear upon the Journal. And nothing of it did appear. It was an unpleasant matter; and if what had transpired had been published, it would undoubtedly have been to the prejudice of Mr. Wilks.

And notwithstanding the unreasonable and most unjust manner in which I was treated on the occasion referred to, I very cheerfully consented to take the advice of the President—which was, to go and see Mr. Wilks *in person* in relation to the matter complained of, agreeably to the teaching of Matt. xviii., 15–17, according to the literal sense. And I acted upon that advice, as will be seen in my letter to the Rev. T. Worcester, under date of June 22, 1855. I first went to Mr. Wilks, privately, with a sincere desire that he might be able to satisfy me that he had not done the great wrong attributed to him; or, if he had, that he might exhibit such signs of sorrow and repentance as the heinous character of his offence demanded. But, getting no satisfaction from this private interview, I subsequently called on him again for the same purpose in company with brother Waldo; but this visit was even more unsatisfactory than the former, and attended with no better results.

Not long after this, at the Convention in Boston, June 27, 1855, which I was prevented from attending by sickness in my family, Mr. Wilks presented the following memorial:—

To the General Convention:—

The undersigned, formerly a member of the Central Convention, respectfully asks to be admitted a member of your body, as a Minister of the New Church.

And whereas, at the last meeting of the General Convention at Portland, the Rev. B. F. Barrett made certain statements affecting the private character of the undersigned, and calculated, if generally believed, to greatly prejudice, if not destroy, his usefulness as a Minister of the Lord's New Church, he would, therefore, most respectfully request that the matter should be investigated at

the present session of the Convention in an impartial and careful manner, in order that the truth concerning the unpleasant affair may be satisfactorily arrived at, and that the result of the investigation be made as public as the charge has been against the subscriber.

Respectfully,

THOMAS WILKS.

The following is the report of the Committee to whom the above memorial was referred. And notwithstanding Mr. Wilks had only asked that this report be made "*as public as the charge had been*"—not one line of which "*charge*" had ever been published—the report was immediately spread before the receivers of the New Church in America, through the columns of both the Convention's organs. Whether the eagerness and speed with which this report was printed and circulated, arose from the fact that its obvious aim and tendency were to screen Mr. Wilks from even a suspicion of wrong, and to damage the reputation, and destroy the influence of Mr. Barrett, I leave for others to decide.

BOSTON, JUNE 29, 1855.

"The Committee to whom was referred the request of Mr. Wilks, asking to be admitted a member of the Convention, and for investigation of the charges preferred by Mr. Barrett against him, have attended to the duty assigned them, and would respectfully report,—That, from the evidence laid before them from Mr. Barrett, and the testimony produced by Mr. Wilks, the Committee are of the opinion that Mr. Barrett labored under a mistaken impression concerning the agency which Mr. Wilks had in the matter of his grievances, and that, under the influence of this impression, he erroneously charged Mr. Wilks with injuring his character as a man and minister of the church.* The Committee are also unanimously in the opinion, that Mr. Wilks has satisfactorily established his innocence of the charges made by Mr. Barrett, and that he should sustain no loss of the confidence of his brethren, or of his character and standing as a minister of the New Church, on that account.

"The Committee, in conclusion, would respectfully call attention to what appears to be a want of conformity to true order, on the part of the two brethren that have been involved in the difficulty in question, in not seeking to be guided by the divine law in settling the same between themselves at first; and it is be-

* The reader should bear in mind that I had never publicly preferred the specific charge here alleged by this Committee. I had simply stated, under the constraining circumstances already narrated, that my grand objection to the Executive Committee's bestowing upon Mr. Wilks any office in the gift of the Convention, was, that he had been guilty of a cruel slander, and one which had never to my knowledge been repented of. So that all which this Committee here say about Mr. B.'s charging Mr. W. "with injuring his character as a man and minister of the New Church," is entirely gratuitous.

lieved that such a course would have prevented much that has transpired of an exceedingly unpleasant and painful character in the case."

All which is respectfully submitted,

OLIVER GERRISH,
ISAAC S. BRITTON, } Committee.*
A. E. SMALL,

* In a letter received from the Chairman of this Committee under date of July 11th, 1855, shortly after the above report was rendered, I find the following passage, which shows either that Mr. Gerrish *had not read* Mr. Miller's first letter, which he acknowledges was in the hands of the Committee, or had read it under some pre-conceived opinion or sinister influence, which caused him to find in it something quite different from what is really there. For he says: "On reference to Mr. Miller's first letter to you, you will notice that Mr. Moffat called on him and asked him what he would think, &c.—Mr. Moffat *does not give his author*, but Mr. Miller infers that it is Mr. Wilks, and charges him with it." Let the reader turn to this letter of Mr. Miller's (No. I.) on page 11, and he will see with how little attention, or under what sort of influence Mr. Gerrish must have read that letter.

I have also before me the copy of a letter from Mr. Miller to Mr. Gerrish, under date of Nov. 10, 1848, upon this same subject, which proves that the latter had received from *some* source a totally false impression in regard to this affair at that early period. The letter is in reply to one from Mr. Gerrish, under date of Nov. 6th, and Mr. Miller tries, throughout, to disabuse the mind of Mr. G. of the erroneous impressions under which he was laboring. Thus he says:

"And then again you say 'If Mr. Barrett had manifested a state or feeling of selfishness towards Mr. W., would not Mr. W. be likely to seek other society?' He would unquestionably. But then I ask, where is the evidence that Mr. Barrett *did* manifest such a state of feeling towards Mr. W.? I certainly am unable to discover by the letters that he did. But one thing I have for a long time observed, that, for several years past, there have been some five or six professed New Churchmen here in New-York, who have evinced the greatest desire to detract and defame Mr. Barrett. And may it not be possible that theirs is the society that Mr. Wilks has sought, without any act of Mr. Barrett? And if it is so, is it very strange that Mr. Barrett should have treated this matter severely, knowing as he did, the system which had been carried on for years, and in such a way, too, that the authors and abettors of the system, never could be reached."

Again in the same letter:—

"For he [Mr. Barrett] was charged with having committed a *fraud* and *theft* against Mr. Wilks and those who contributed through Mr. B. what they did to Mr. Wilks. And it was one of those acts of charity which was so misrepresented and falsified, and which was well aimed, and to all appearance well calculated to destroy the character of Mr. Barrett as a man, and his influence as a minister of the New Church. And has Mr. Wilks shown any desire to repair the wrong? None whatever."

The whole of this letter is in a tone of earnest remonstrance with Mr. Gerrish, for allowing himself to cherish the false impression, in relation to this matter which he had *some how* imbibed. This explains, in part, the reason why the report of this committee is as we find it. The strange thing about it is, that a gentleman

In this report the reader will notice that Mr. Barrett is said to have "labored under a mistaken impression" in regard to the agency Mr. W. had in the matter complained of, that he had "erroneously charged Mr. Wilks with injuring his character," and that Mr. Wilks had "satisfactorily established his innocence of the charges made by Mr. Barrett," and that he ought, therefore, "to sustain no loss of the confidence of his brethren." That there had been, "on the part of the two brethren" (evidently *meaning* on the part of Mr. Barrett especially), "a want of conformity to true order, in not seeking to be guided by the divine law in settling the difficulty" in the outset. Now, if I had really been guilty to the extent alleged in the report of this Committee—if I had accused a brother falsely, and in my manner of doing it had broken the divine law, then surely I ought to implore the divine forgiveness for such offences, and the forgiveness of my brethren; and I should not fail to do it. But I shall not assume the province of judge in this matter. I have no desire, nor would it become me to do so. I think I can afford to leave others to judge, when they shall have weighed the evidence of Mr. Wilks' guilt, which I here offer, and an important part of which (letters marked No. I. and No. V.) was furnished to that very Committee. And, if the reader should find it difficult to conceive what motive could have prompted the Convention to render a verdict in this case so unjust and prejudicial to myself, and so entirely contrary to the evidence, he may, perhaps, find a partial solution of his difficulty, if he will read a series of calm criticisms from my pen, of the doings and short-comings of the General Convention, published in the New Church Repository only a few months previous to that Convention in Boston; and if he will, in addition to this, consider that, for some time previous, I had incurred the displeasure of the President and other leading men in the Convention, by venturing to entertain and express views upon the subject of *re-baptism* somewhat at variance with theirs; while Mr. Wilks, only a few months before, had published a pamphlet, zealously *advocating* the Convention doctrine on this subject, and insisting that baptism by any other hands than those of a professedly New Church Minister, is without validity, and not to be recognized as baptism. But what influence this may have had in perverting judgment, it is not for me to say. Each one must judge for himself. And now for the facts and the evidence.

In the spring of 1848, I received and accepted a call to become the

of Mr. Gerrish's good sense, having at an early day made up his mind about this matter, should not have seen the impropriety of his serving on that committee; for by the rules of our civil tribunals, he would have been pronounced incompetent.

pastor of the first Society of the New Church in Cincinnati, and removed to that city early in the month of May. In less than two months after my arrival in Cincinnati, I received from my friend and brother in the Church, Thomas S. Miller, of New York city, the following letter:—

B.—(No. I.)

NEW YORK, June 23d, 1848.

Rev. B. F. BARRETT,

DEAR SIR:—I have just arrived from Boston, where I have been during the Convention, and was very much gratified with my visit. The proceedings of Convention you will be able to get a better account of from your delegate and from the Magazine, than I can communicate. Therefore, I will content myself by expressing an opinion that everything indicates a radical change in the organization of that body. But the principal object that induces me to write to you at this time is, to obtain correct information of a subject which has been made use of by one of our members, in a way calculated to injure you in the minds of those that are not acquainted with you. And to the point:—About three weeks ago, Mr. J. L. Moffat called at the store, and, after some conversation, asked me what I would think of you, when informed that you had received some cloth as a present for Mr. Wilks, and that he at first declined to accept it; but that you insisted that he should, and sent it to his house; and then, about two years afterwards, just before you left here, you sent him a bill for the same cloth, amounting to \$8,00, and received pay for the same. I replied to Mr. Moffat, that such a charge as that was so incredible, that I could not give an opinion on a mere supposition, and asked him for the evidence, which he could not give me, but would apply to Mr. Wilks for the desired evidence. I then expressed to Mr. M. my strong disapprobation of such a course in any one claiming to be a New Churchman, or a Christian, in supposing cases, and insinuating that they were true, without having facts to sustain them in such insinuations, more particularly when aimed against an absent man. After some further conversation, Mr. M. left, and said he would obtain the evidence or facts in the matter. I told him to do so. Not having heard anything more of the matter, I concluded it was a sort of vision of Mr. Moffat's, and best to say nothing more about it. But on my return from Boston, I met Mr. Wilks in Providence, and we returned to New York by the same boat; and in conversation about various matters, it occurred to my mind to ask Mr. W. about the matter; and to my inquiries, Mr. Wilks stated:

That about two years ago, when he resided in Williamsburg, he called at your house, and you informed him that you had two yards of cloth for him, and he declined to accept it, as he was not able to pay for it, and was not willing to receive it as a present; but you insisted that it was for him, and he must accept it, which he, however, refused to do; and that, some time after, he having removed to New York, you sent it to his house directing the bearer to leave it; and on its being so left, he (Mr. W.) remonstrated and objected to receiving it, and observed that he could not use it until he should pay for it. And

thus the matter stood: the cloth left with Mr. W., and nothing more said or done about it, until a few days before you left here, he received a bill from you, through Mr. John Allen, for two yards of cloth, at \$4.00 a yard, amounting to \$8.00, which he paid. He informed me that he had not mentioned the subject to any person but Mr. Allen.* I remarked to him, that as the matter now stood in the absence of any explanation from you, the influence that would be drawn, was, that you had received a present from others for Mr. Wilks, and that you had received pay for it from him, and appropriated it to your own use. And as I was not prepared to put that construction on the matter, that I would, if he had no objection, write to you and inform you of his statement; and that I had not the least doubt that the whole matter would be explained by you satisfactorily to the mind of every one. He said he had no objection to my doing so, if I was careful to state just what he had told; and therefore I have written this to you, giving his statement, in every essential, and in about the same words, or as near as I could give them.

And now, my dear Sir, I will repeat that I have not the shadow of a doubt, that you will be able to give a satisfactory explanation of the whole matter, should you consider it of sufficient consequence to notice. Please write me, and if I should deem it necessary to pursue the matter any further, I will use your communication, if I judge it to be requisite, in your behalf.

Please give my love to Mrs. Barrett, and all others of my New Church acquaintances, not forgetting Mr. Wayne, and believe me,

Yours truly,

THOMAS S. MILLER.

Now if Mr. Wilks' statement, as here reported by Mr. Miller had been true, then Mr. Barrett had certainly been guilty of a very heinous offence, and one which could not fail to ruin his reputation wherever this story should be believed. He had received goods given him in charity expressly for Mr. WILKS, had sent the goods to Mr. Wilks contrary to his remonstrance, declaring that they were *for* him, and insisting that he *should* accept them; and then, two years afterwards, had sent to Mr. W. his bill for the same goods, received the money for them, and appropriated it to his own use. This was the impression which Mr. Wilks' own statement of the matter made upon Mr. Miller's mind, at the very time Mr. Miller *called on him for the particulars*; and from Mr. Miller's remark at the close of this statement, Mr. W. *knew* that just this impression had been made upon him. This was the impression received by Mr. Miller when he first heard the story from Mr. Moffat.

* [On account of the unfriendly feelings which Mr. Wilks well knew were at that time cherished by Mr. Allen towards Mr. Barrett, making such a statement to Mr. A. was almost as sure to give it a wide circulation, as if he had printed it in a public newspaper.]

This is the way, too, that Mr. Moffat himself had understood Mr. Wilks to have stated the matter; hence the reason of his saying, "What would you think of Mr. Barrett, if informed that he had done such a thing?" adding, that he would obtain from MR. WILKS the evidence that he had done so. And this is the form in which the story circulated, being in all cases traced to Mr. Wilks *as the author*. If the story had been true, it is plain that Mr. Barrett had done an act which was no better than stealing—stealing in not a very genteel way either—from one of his needy brethren in the Ministry. Indeed, the transaction, as stated by Mr. Wilks, was rather worse than ordinary theft.

Now let any one of my brethren in the Ministry reflect how he would probably feel, on learning that such a story as this had been set on foot about himself by a brother minister, and was being secretly circulated from mouth to mouth while he was many hundred miles away. Let him reflect, too, upon the very aggravating circumstances in this case, as disclosed in the following letter, and I think he will not wonder at, nor find it difficult to forgive, the degree of feeling exhibited in my letter written in answer to Mr. Miller's of June 23d, and which I here publish:—

(No. II.)

CINCINNATI, July 1st, 1848.

MR. T. S. MILLER,

DEAR SIR:—I have this moment received and read your letter of the 23d ult., with feelings of unmingled pain and sorrow. I could not have believed that a man professing what Mr. Wilks professes, and occupying the position that he occupies, could have circulated a report so false and calumnious as he *knows* the statement to be that he has made to yourself and others, in regard to the transaction referred to between him and me. I will here make a simple statement of all the facts in the case, and I believe that my word will be received by all who are acquainted with me; and should there be any who doubt my veracity, my wife, who knows the facts, will testify to the truth of all I say.

When the Rev. Thomas Wilks first received the doctrines of the New Church, and had communicated to me his desire and intention to devote himself to the New Church ministry, I, of course, felt a good deal of interest in him. I soon learned that he was in indigent circumstances—that he was unable to purchase anything like genteel apparel for himself or family. He himself told me that his wife had not a bonnet or dress suitable to appear in at Church, and that this was why she felt unwilling to attend our meetings with him; and his own clothes were very rusty. I immediately interested myself in his behalf, and soon obtained from among our friends some cloth or clothing for him. I do not now remember what amount, but *all* that I obtained was given him. Mrs. Barrett also interested herself for Mrs. Wilks, and obtained from our lady friends, something for her in the way of clothing. I also obtained from our brethren, a con-

tribution of several volumes of New Church books for Mr. Wilks ; and a small sum of money—\$20, I think—was allowed him from the treasury of the General Convention, *at my solicitation*. Just about that time I received as a present *for myself*, from Mrs. Fairfax Catlett, sufficient broadcloth for a coat. This I immediately determined to give to Mr. Wilks, as I was not myself in *immediate* need of it. I accordingly told Mr. W. that I would give him that broadcloth—that I wished him to accept it *as a present from me*—that it had been given me by a kind friend, but I thought that he (Mr. W.) needed it more than I did. And never, I believe, did gift from mortal man go freer or more affectionately than that did from me. And it was, to all appearance, thankfully received by Mr. Wilks. He appeared very grateful, and expressed himself so. He did not then say one word, as I remember, about *refusing* it—not a word that could be construed into *declining* to accept the gift. On the contrary, he seemed very thankful, as he had reason to be, for what he must have seen I gave so freely. The broadcloth was then at my house. Mr. W. said he would leave it there with my permission, as he had not then the means to pay for making it into a coat ; and as he should get it made in New York, when he was able, he could then call at my house and take it. I said, very well, and added, that *perhaps* I could get some tailor of my acquaintance to make it for him at a reduced price, which I tried to do, as Mr. Howard may possibly remember.

Shortly after this, Mr. Wilks received a *license to preach*, from Mr. DeCharms of Baltimore, which greatly surprised me, after all the professions of friendship for, gratitude towards, and confidence in me, which he had so often and freely expressed. I could scarcely believe it until I called on Mr. Wilks, (which I did immediately, in company with Mr. Ropes) and ascertained the fact from himself. The explanation that he then gave was satisfactory to me, though it did not seem to be to Mr. W. ; for he came the whole way from Williamsburg to my house the next day, to explain farther, or to talk more about it, and to express his regret at what he had permitted to be done for him by Mr. DeCharms. He *pretended* not to know that the General Convention granted *licenses* to candidates, although, I had myself told him the course to be pursued in entering the ministry, and he had read our Rules of Order but a short time before.

Some two months or so, I should think, passed by, and Mr. Wilks did not call for his cloth, feeling, as I supposed, some delicacy about it, after the course he had taken. But I considered that cloth *his* property, after I had given it to him, and he had thankfully received it—*none the less* his, because it still remained in my house. And, in order to relieve him from the embarrassment, which I thought he might very naturally feel in *calling* for the cloth, I *sent* it to his house in New York, accompanied with a friendly note. This, I think, was some time in the month of May, 1846, shortly after he removed from Williamsburg. And although I saw Mr. Wilks at least two or three times between this and the middle of June following, he said not a word, as I remember, about the cloth or note that had been sent, (there was no need of a word)—*certainly not a word* about *declining* to accept the gift.

In June following, Mr. W. went to Baltimore, and was there ordained by Mr. De Charms, contrary to his repeated, express and solemn declarations given by him to me, freely and unsolicited, just before he left New York. Some weeks after his return—I cannot say how many—he called at my house, and then, *for the first time*, said he did not wish to receive that broadcloth of me as a present—he wished I would allow him to pay me for it. This surprised and grieved me. I remonstrated with him; told him it had been freely given by me, and as freely received by him some time before; and that, notwithstanding the course he had pursued about his ordination, had surprised me a good deal after all his solemn pledges, (not one of which had ever been solicited) I still wished to remain on friendly and brotherly terms with him; and begged that he would not now insist on my doing an act which was so repugnant to my feelings, and which would look as if he did not feel towards me as I wished him to feel—did not feel friendly. He still insisted on my allowing him to pay me for the cloth—said his friends were not satisfied to have him accept it as a present from me. He mentioned the name of Mr. Van Nortwick, and I think, remarked that Mr. V. said he would rather pay me for the cloth himself, and would willingly do so, rather than he should be indebted to me for it. I told him he need not consider himself *indebted* to me in the least for anything I had given him, or done for him; that I had merely done what I had felt prompted by the Divine Being to do, and therefore, merely my duty. After saying all that I knew how to say—and the conversation was a long, but not an excited or impassioned one—against receiving pay for that which I had originally parted with as a free gift to him, Mr. Wilks still insisted that he *would not* receive it as a present. I then told him I would take the cloth back—that it was a present to me, and I could not think of receiving pay for it, or of *selling* it. This—and it struck me as very strange at the time, but I now see through it—this, Mr. W. was unwilling that I should do; said that he *wanted* the cloth, but was not able to pay me for it then, but would do so by and by. At last I was *forced* by his importunities, to say, as I did: “Well, Mr. Wilks, for the sake of peace and good fellowship, I *will* do in this case, whatever will be most satisfactory to you. If you insist on paying me for the cloth, reluctant as I am to have you do so, I will, to *satisfy you*, consider it henceforth as a *debt*.” These are the words I used, as near as I can now remember. With this, Mr. W. expressed himself satisfied. He then asked me the price of the cloth. I told him I did not know, as it was *given* to me, but I supposed it was worth about \$8. To this, Mr. W. assented, and we parted with perfectly friendly feelings on my part, and with a strong desire to remain still on friendly terms with Mr. W., if he would permit me to do so; although I confess that his singular course about that piece of cloth—the determined manner in which he insisted on *paying* me for it, after having received it thankfully as a gift, six months before, had deeply wounded my feelings. But from that moment, I regarded the cloth no longer as a *gift*, but as a *debt*—and this, because I *promised* him that I would so regard it—the only thing with which he would be satisfied. I regarded the debt as much ~~more~~ *sacred* too, than I should have done, had I sold him the cloth originally, because of the severe struggle which

it had cost me to comply with what seemed to me his most unreasonable request.

This was about two years ago. Since that time and during the last year especially, Mr. Wilks has not treated me in that friendly manner in which I feel that I deserved to be treated, and in which I have endeavored to treat him. Moreover, circumstances, which I need not here mention, led me to suspect that Mr. W. *never intended to pay* me for the cloth, even at the time when he was insisting so strenuously on my allowing him to do so—which, I am sorry to say, turns out to be a fact. In order, however, that my mind might be relieved on this point—that I might think *better* of Mr. Wilks, if he should give me evidence that he deserved to be thought better of—I resolved to put his intentions to the test, and to do what I otherwise should not have done—to *remind* him of the *debt* which had not been adjusted. Accordingly a few days before I left New York, I addressed a note to Mr. W. stating what was a fact, that I was in want of funds, was about to remove from New-York, &c., and should be glad if he would settle the little matter between us. I believe I mentioned the sum of \$8,00, but told him he could make it less if he chose. I did not make out any bill, nor even mention the *cloth, yards*, or any thing of the sort, thinking that if Mr. Wilks had forgotten the conversation on the subject two years ago, and the agreement that he then *extorted* from me, (which it is *impossible* that he could have forgotten) he would be led to ask an explanation of the meaning of my note. For had he *not* remembered that conversation—the only time that ever a word was said about the *price* or the *yards* of that cloth—he would not have known whether the \$8,00 was for the coat pattern, or for other clothing, or for books, or money, all of which he had received through me and my wife. But he asked no explanation of my note. He made no complaint to me by word or writing, as if I had done something out of the way, or something unexpected to him. He merely sent me \$8,00 by Mr. Allen, without even writing me a word.

This is the simple truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth concerning this affair; and this, as our illumined Swedenborg once said, "I am ready at any time to affirm with the most solemn oath that can be offered in this matter." Were this moment my last on earth, I would, were it needful, assert with my dying breath, that what I have here stated is, in every important particular, *strictly true*. But I am happy in the belief that my character for veracity, integrity, and honorable conduct, is sufficiently well established wherever I have been known for the last thirty years, to render wholly unnecessary any such solemn asseverations. I may not always be strictly accurate in regard to dates; but in regard to the main facts themselves, and the precise order of their occurrence, I *know* that I am correct, and Mr. Wilks *knows* so too, whatever he may *say* to the contrary. They are of such a nature that he *cannot* have forgotten or misremembered them.

And now when you compare the statement I have here made, with that made to you and others by Mr. Wilks, you will see how shamefully and cruelly that man has slandered me. He has stated two or three facts it is true; but having inverted the order of these facts, and having suppressed other important

facts, and added some things that are utterly untrue, he has made out a story which is false from beginning to end, and as gross a calumny as ever fell from human lips.

And when I considered that it was through me that Mr. Wilks first received the doctrines of Heaven—through me that he was introduced into the visible Church—through me that he received cheerful counsel, encouraging words, and friendly succor, when he most needed them—through me that he obtained aid in books, money, clothing, &c., when he was in a state of great destitution—and when I consider that I have never spoken of him, and never treated him in any other than a friendly and charitable manner, notwithstanding his own most singular course toward me—the cruel calumny which he has set on foot, and which his friends are now busy in circulating when I am far away, fills me with pain and sorrow unutterable. Never in my life have I been so wronged by any individual—and by a man, too, from whom I deserve, if I deserve it from any person on earth, nothing but kindness, respect and love.

It is not for me to judge Mr. W.—the Lord forbid that I should do that. Neither do I desire for him anything worse than the All Wise and Merciful One shall see fit to inflict—shall see to be for his best and eternal good. On account of himself and his family, and especially on account of the church, which, by this calumny, he has so greatly dishonored, I mourn and grieve. But my prayer is that he may be led to make that full, humble, and penitent confession of his guilt in this instance, which alone can wipe it away, and repair in some measure, the wrong he has done me. I wish you to read this letter to Mr. W., and also to all others who may have heard, or may hear, his story. And if the calumny has found its way beyond the limits of your city, I wish it might be followed by a copy of this letter. I shall wait with some solicitude to learn what Mr. Wilks intends to do towards setting the matter right.

Yours truly,

B. F. BARRETT.

I have carefully read this letter of my husband, and can testify that, in every important particular with which I am acquainted, it is strictly true.

ELIZABETH BARRETT.

The above letter was sent for the satisfaction of Mr. Miller, and the rest of my brethren in New York, who had heard, and been much afflicted by, this scandalous report. But I felt that my whole duty was not done until I had written Mr. Wilks a private letter, complaining of the great wrong he had done me, and asking how he intended to adjust or repair it. I have not a copy of that letter, but the evidence that I wrote such an one is seen in the following from Mr. Wilks, written in reply.

(No. III.)

NEW-YORK, Sept. 20th, 1848.

REV. SIR :—

I received yours of the 13th inst. yesterday, in which I am accused of setting in circulation a cruel and malignant slander about you. Of this charge I am perfectly guiltless. If your friend, Mr. Miller, busies himself in going about from one person to another, scraping up all he can, putting his own construction upon it, and then dealing it out to others in his own way, you should charge him with the circulation of the report, and not me. As far as I can understand, all that has been said upon this subject has been solely through Mr. Miller.

You ask me what I intend to do in the premises. I answer, *nothing*—inasmuch as I have had nothing to do with the circulation of any report.

Very Respectfully Yours,

THOMAS WILKS.

Not satisfied to leave the matter so, and feeling that a man who was capable of doing so great a wrong as it appeared that Mr. Wilks had done, was unworthy the office of a Christian minister, and wishing to afford him a full and fair opportunity of vindicating his innocence, I next submitted to him, through two of my New York brethren, the following

PROPOSITION. (No. IV.)

"Whereas, Mr. Thomas S. Miller, of New York City, has sent me in writing a statement made to him by the Rev. Thomas Wilks, touching a transaction between Mr. Wilks and myself; and whereas I am informed that Mr. Wilks has since acknowledged Mr. Miller's report of his statement to be substantially correct; and whereas I must pronounce Mr. Wilks' statement to Mr. Miller as reported to me (which statement I am informed he has made to others also) to be false in every essential particular, and calumnious in the highest degree; and whereas Mr. Wilks in attempting to exculpate himself, has (if correctly reported by Mr. Miller) told some ten or twelve additional falsehoods; and whereas I have pursued towards Mr. W. such a course as the laws of charity seem to me to require—giving him every opportunity to make amends for his wrong—and he has positively refused to do anything in the premises, alleging that he is 'perfectly guiltless' of having set any report in circulation about me; and whereas I am obliged, as the matter now stands, to regard Mr. Wilks as a man destitute of moral principle—as a base and wilful slanderer, and as such, unfit for the christian ministry, and unworthy the respect and confidence of the members of the New Church; and whereas it is painful to me to regard and speak of Mr. Wilks in this manner, having no desire to condemn or injure him, therefore I hereby *propose* to the Rev. Thomas Wilks, as an amicable and peaceful mode of adjusting this difficulty, and of proving his innocence of the thing charged upon him, if proof of it there be—that the whole affair be submitted for investigation to an ecclesiastical court, consisting of the New Church ministers east of the Allegany Mountains, to be held in the

city of New York, either the week before or the week after the meeting of the General Convention, in June, 1849. With this course I will be satisfied, provided Mr. Wilks will pledge himself, before witnesses or in writing, to abide by the decision of such ecclesiastical court.

B. F. BARRETT.

" CINCINNATI, Oct. 28, 1848."

The above proposition was submitted to Mr. Wilks on the 18th of Nov., 1848, through Mr. John McCraith, accompanied by Mr. Oliver J. Noyes, then both of New York, and personally acquainted with Mr. Wilks; but Mr. W. declined accepting it. And there this matter rested, until the Executive Committee of the General Convention, in 1854, insisted on making Mr. Wilks an officer of that body before he had become a member, and contrary to my earnest remonstrance, and solemn protest.

And notwithstanding the General Convention, in its published report, has charged me with "not seeking to be guided by the divine law in settling this difficulty at first," I really do not see how it was possible for me, under the circumstances, to have acted more in "conformity to true order" than I did. I was 800 miles distant from Mr. Wilks. What more did the laws of charity require me to do, than I actually did do? I have never yet been able to see what more I ought to have done.

It will be seen that the charge of slander against Mr. Wilks, is based, not upon anything that Mr. Allen, or Mr. Moffat, or any one else may have said, but solely and exclusively upon Mr. Wilks' *own statement* in Mr. M.'s first letter to me—(No. I.)

Did Mr. Miller report Mr. Wilks correctly in that letter? The evidence that he did so, is exceedingly strong—so strong, that I see not how it is possible to doubt it. He made a copy of that letter, word for word; and this copy, or that part of it containing the report of Mr. Wilks' statement, he read to Mr. W. in the presence of Mr. Waldo, and Mr. Wilks pronounced it correct in every important particular. Here is Mr. Miller's testimony on this point. He says:—

A.—(No. V.)

NEW-YORK, Sunday, Sept. 3, 1848.

I called this afternoon on Mr. Wilks in company with Mr. Waldo, and introduced the subject of my letter of June 23d, 1848, to Mr. Barrett, and, from a copy, read that part which referred to Mr. Wilks' statement to me about the cloth, which he stated was substantially true. And being about reading it over to Mr. Wilks the second time, I remarked to him that it was exceedingly difficult to write down the exact words of a conversation, and I was desirous of writing down nothing but the truth. I would read the part containing his

statement again; and if there were any words used that conveyed any different impression than he intended to convey, I wished he would point it out and correct it. Also if there was any thing there written, that he had not said to me, if he would tell me I would erase it. He said he would do so. And on my reading the second time his statement, Mr. Wilks said, as to its being about two years from the time the cloth was sent, he could not be sure as to the period of time. I remarked, "That is unimportant." He also said that the words, "as he was not able to pay for it," were not used to me by him in that conversation. There was no other exception taken by Mr. Wilks to any thing which I had written to Mr. Barrett as Mr. Wilks' statement to me on board of the steam-boat.

[I omit here, merely for the sake of brevity, a portion of Mr. Miller's letter which relates to a dialogue carried on between him and Mr. Wilks, and which is not important; and I give the concluding portion of this letter, which reads thus,]

After some further conversation, I became satisfied that Mr. W. did not mean to do anything to set the matter right; when I told him, if he did not do something, or write to Mr. Barrett and satisfy him, I should (as I had got into the matter) read Mr. B.'s letter to all that I could ascertain had heard the outrageous slander, and such others as I might deem necessary in defence of an absent man. Whereupon Mr. Wilks, somewhat excited, said if I *dared* to read that letter around, and thereby injure him, he would come out with a full statement in the N. J. Magazine. I assured him I had no desire to injure him, and that I had no personal feeling in the matter; but if he did not set the matter right with Mr. Barrett, just as sure as I lived, I would read the letter whenever and wherever I might deem it necessary in the cause of justice.

The above statement I have carefully read to Mr. Samuel L. Waldo, with a request, that, if anything written was incorrect, he would point out the error and I would correct it. After it was read, Mr. Waldo said he could not discover anything incorrect in the statement.

THOMAS S. MILLER.

Now it appears from the above letter that Mr. Wilks did himself acknowledge the correctness, in every essential particular, of Mr. Miller's statement in his first letter to me (No. I.); and this, too, after it had been read to him a *second time*, and he had been *particularly requested* if there was *anything* in it calculated to convey an impression different from what he meant to convey, he would point it out. And to the truth of this Mr. Miller has testified in the most solemn manner, as appears from the following affidavit.

State of California, }
County of San Francisco. }

Thomas S. Miller, of said County and State, and formerly of the city of New York, being sworn, says, that the annexed paper, dated New York, Sunday, Sept.

3d, 1848, and marked A. [p. 19], purporting to give an account of a conversation between the Rev. Thomas Wilks and deponent, in presence of Mr. Samuel L. Waldo, is a correct and true account of said conversation in every particular; that said account was written out by this deponent a short time after said interview (the same day, as this deponent believes.)

This deponent further says, that a letter marked B. [p. 11], dated New York, June 23d, 1848, and (on outside) addressed "Mr. B. F. Barrett, Cincinnati, Ohio," is the original letter from which deponent copied the copy of the letter referred to, as being the letter read to Mr. Wilks by deponent on the day of the interview with Mr. Wilks in presence of Mr. Waldo; and the account given in said original letter, of the conversation with Mr. Wilks on board the steamboat, is true; that said letter was written to Mr. Barrett by this deponent, and that the copy of the same which was read to Mr. Wilks was copied by this deponent, and that this deponent believes that said copy was correct and true, word for word,* and deponent is sure that it was correct in every material particular.

And deponent further says that he had no feelings for or against either Mr. Barrett or Mr. Wilks in regard to the matters in controversy.

THOMAS S. MILLER.

Subscribed and sworn to this 26th }
day of May, 1855, before me, }
CHARLES HALSEY, }
Notary Public. }

And the testimony of Mr. Miller, here given in the most solemn form, is confirmed by that of Mr. Waldo, who was present and heard Mr. Wilks acknowledge the correctness of Mr. Miller's written and *twice read* report of the statement on board the steamboat, and who certifies as follows:—

I hereby certify and declare that the annexed statement [No. V] referred to in the above affidavit of Mr. Thomas S. Miller, is in all points correct, according to the best of my knowledge and recollection. And I will further add, that I am well satisfied, that, in all Mr. Miller did in relation to this unpleasant affair, he was actuated by a deep sense of duty, and not by any unkind feelings towards Mr. Wilks.

SAMUEL L. WALDO.

NEW YORK, May 27th, 1856.

Now, if Mr. Miller's testimony in this case is to be relied on, then it is certain that Mr. Wilks is justly chargeable with having uttered a base calumny, and one of more than ordinary cruelty, when all the circum-

* I have compared the copy read to Mr. Wilks with the original letter as sent to me, and find them to agree "word for word."

B. F. B.

stances of the case are considered. And if Mr. Miller's testimony is to be set aside as worthless, then we must believe him to be an exceedingly base and unscrupulous man. We must believe that he fabricated the statement which he says he got from Mr. Wilks on board the steamboat, and that he never read to Mr. Wilks his copy of that statement, or that Mr. W., at any rate, never acknowledged its correctness if read to him; and that Mr. Miller, in making affidavit to all this, has been guilty of deliberate perjury. Certainly we ought not to believe a man capable of so great wickedness, without the best of evidence. Yet the General Convention, it seems, without *any* evidence which it *dares produce*, believes that Mr. Miller *has* perjured himself in this case. For how, otherwise, could the Convention set aside Mr. Miller's testimony, and report, as it has, "that Mr. Wilks has satisfactorily established his innocence of the charges made by Mr. Barrett," having in its hands this testimony of Mr. Miller, which, if admitted, proved Mr. W. guilty. For the charges made by Mr. Barrett, were based upon the written statements of Mr. Miller, whose correctness he has since affirmed with the solemnity of an oath. The verdict of the Convention sets aside Mr. Miller's sworn testimony as altogether worthless; and we are not permitted to know upon what kind or what amount of evidence that body relies for proof of Mr. Miller's perjury. It would seem right and proper that I, at least, who am the aggrieved party, should know upon what grounds Mr. Miller's solemn testimony in this case was set aside, or by what evidence Mr. Wilks' innocence was so "satisfactorily established." But although the evidence, as I learn, was presented in writing, I have not been able to this day to obtain one line of it, notwithstanding my repeated efforts to do so. I was informed that Mr. John L. Jewett was one of the witnesses, and the main one upon which the Convention relied in setting aside as worthless the testimony of Mr. Miller. And I wrote Mr. Jewett *three times*, politely requesting him to furnish me with a copy of his testimony: but Mr. J. did not condescend to answer either of my letters. Hearing that Mr. Secretary Hayward had all the testimony in writing, I addressed a polite note to him, asking for a copy of that which was supposed to invalidate the testimony of Mr. Miller; but Mr. Secretary Hayward positively refused to furnish me with any of that testimony. I then wrote *twice* to Mr. Wilks himself, as politely as I knew how, offering to publish in this pamphlet any evidence which he had, or had presented to the Convention, in proof of his innocence, if he would furnish me with a copy of it. The following is my last letter to him, which merely repeats the substance of the first:—

ORANGE, July 5, 1856.

REV. THOMAS WILKS,

Sir :—I wrote you on the 18th ult., advising you that I was about to publish the facts and evidence in the case to which my memorial to the late Convention related, and that if you would furnish me with a copy of the testimony whereby it was thought by the Convention of last year, that you had “satisfactorily established your innocence” of the offence charged against you, I would cheerfully incorporate such testimony in my forthcoming pamphlet. Not having received any answer to that letter, I write you again to say, that I will publish in my pamphlet *any* evidence, not unreasonable in amount, which you may think sufficient to prove your innocence;—so anxious am I to afford you every opportunity of vindicating yourself before that ultimate earthly tribunal, where the case is now about to be carried. Trusting to hear from you soon if you have any evidence you wish to offer, I remain,

Yours truly,

B. F. BARRETT.

To neither of my letters—although it is now nearly a year since they were written—has Mr. Wilks ever deigned to reply. And yet, in the presence of the Committee appointed at the last Convention to act on my memorial, Mr. W. *professed* to entertain none other than charitable and friendly feelings towards me. The reader will see, therefore, that it is no fault of mine, that the evidence, by which Mr. Wilks’ innocence was thought by the General Convention to have been “satisfactorily established,” is not presented in this pamphlet. I have used every proper and reasonable effort to obtain that evidence, but all to no purpose. And to this day I am left in ignorance of the precise nature and amount of the evidence by which his innocence is thought to have been proved.

And now as to the reliability of Mr. Miller’s testimony, which, though given under oath, has been set aside by the General Convention, as utterly worthless. I say *has been set aside*, for the verdict of that body in this case shows that no reliance whatever was placed upon that testimony. And thus Mr. M. is indirectly—by implication, at least—pronounced a perjured man by the largest organized body of New Churchmen in the United States—a body that assumes to be “the General New Church of the country.” I know not how this may strike others, but it strikes me as a very serious matter. I think nothing short of a large amount of the most unquestionable evidence could justify the verdict of such a body, which goes to impugn the sworn testimony of a private individual. For it is plain that Mr. Wilks’ “*innocence*” cannot be inferred, without supposing that Mr. Miller has sworn falsely.

1. In the first place, then, what conceivable motive could Mr. Miller have had in manufacturing such a story as this about Mr. Wilks, and

then making oath to its correctness? Especially as he declares, and the truth of his declaration is well known to all acquainted with the parties, that he was at this time just as friendly to Mr. Wilks as he was to Mr. Barrett. What had Mr. M. to gain by writing me such a tissue of falsehoods in regard to Mr. Wilks, as the supposition of Mr. W.'s "innocence" implies that he did? I think the Convention is in duty bound to show the existence of *some motive* which might have induced Mr. M. to commit so great iniquity. I have never heard any adequate motive suggested; nor can I possibly conceive of any.

2. In the second place, I have known Mr. Miller intimately for seven years, and can truly say that I never knew a more sincere, conscientious, truthful, and scrupulously just person in my life than he. I never heard but one individual doubt Mr. M.'s veracity, and that was Mr. John L. Jewett, whose testimony, it is presumed, was mainly relied on by the Convention to invalidate that of Mr. Miller. But I have now in my possession a long communication—too long to publish here—detailing the circumstances of a *personal difficulty* between Mr. Jewett and Mr. Miller, which occurred subsequent to this Wilks affair; the substance of which communication is also susceptible of proof, and shows Mr. Jewett to have been chiefly—I should say *altogether*—in the wrong. Besides, I have a private letter from Mr. Jewett himself, dated Oct. 31, 1848—about three months after Mr. Miller's first letter to me,—in which he expresses his unbiassed opinion of Mr. Miller's conduct in this case—an opinion all the more valuable from the fact that it was expressed *before* his personal difficulty with Mr. Miller. It will also be seen that Mr. Jewett speaks in this letter of another gentleman very differently from what he has been known to speak of him since he has been the agent of the General Convention, and in intimate alliance with some of its chief rulers. Referring in his letter to the Wilks calumny, he says:—

(No. VI.)

"I feel very sensibly the injury done you by the gross slander that has been fabricated against you. A more malicious and fiendish thing I cannot well imagine. I am not surprised that it has given you great pain, and that you feel impelled to do yourself justice by all justifiable means. Of one thing, however, I can assure you, that, for the sake of all your friends here, and, in fact, of all who know you—for your full justification and freedom from all suspicion of having ever thought of so mean and wicked a thing as that imputed to you—in their minds—you need not take another step. There is nobody here that ever believed the slander, from the first; and if there was any one who was disposed to think you might possibly have given some occasion for it, your letter

to Mr. Miller will dispel all their doubts. That letter, detailing all the circumstances of your intercourse with Mr. Wilks, will, I feel convinced, carry conviction to the mind of every person whose good opinion is worth a straw. The judicious manner in which Mr. Miller has acted, and the foolish evasions, equivocations, and contradictions in which Mr. Wilks has involved himself, will also satisfactorily determine the kind and degree of agency which Mr. Wilks has had in the matter, and prevent him from harming you again. I can also assure you that your friends here will always see that justice is done you in this business whenever and wherever the calumny shall be uttered.

JOHN L. JEWETT.

This, be it observed, was written at a time when Mr. Jewett was in a state of comparative *freedom*, when he was friendly with all parties—with the New York as well as with the Boston brethren—and when he was not especially interested in maintaining the order and policy of the General Convention.

3. In the third place, it is an easy thing to establish the credibility of Mr. Miller as a witness in a case of this sort. The following testimonial to his honesty and truthfulness, coming as it does from New Churchmen who have known him long and intimately, ought to be sufficient to satisfy every unprejudiced mind. And a score of other names might easily be added if necessary.

(No. VII.)

BROOKLYN, Aug. 27, 1856.

We the undersigned, receivers of the heavenly doctrines of the New Jerusalem, in the cities of New York and Brooklyn, being personally acquainted with Thomas S. Miller, (formerly of New York, now of California,) and several of us having been for a number of years intimately associated with him as members of the same New Church Society, do hereby certify and declare that he was ever regarded by us as a worthy member of the church and a most excellent man. And we may further add—which we do with great pleasure—that we have rarely known an individual whom we consider more uniformly kind, just, honest, conscientious, and *truthful* than Mr. Miller, or one who aimed to perform all known duties with more scrupulous fidelity.

SAMUEL L. WALDO,
C. SULLIVAN,
WM. McGEORGE,
ZENA H. HARRIS,
R. L. SMITH,
HENRY P. JOURNEY,

J. K. HOYT,
THOMAS S. DICK,
FERDINAND L. WILSEY, M.D.
GEORGE BUSH,
LYMAN S. BURNHAM,
R. C. MOFFAT, M.D.

I will only add to the above the following letter, which I received from Prof. Bush upon the same subject, and which he has kindly permitted me to publish.

(No. VIII.)

BROOKLYN, May 30th, 1856.

DEAR BR. BARRETT,

Your note of yesterday I have just received, and hasten to say in reply, that it gives me no little surprise to learn that there should be, from any quarter, an intimation affecting the uprightness, sincerity, and entire truthfulness of our esteemed friend Thomas S. Miller, than whom I have scarcely ever known an individual of more conscientious spirit or honest intention.

In reference to the matter to which you allude, I had occasional conversations with Mr. M., and I recollect of being particularly struck with the motives which appeared to prompt him in the course he pursued. He had heard a report of some transactions which seemed to reflect somewhat upon yourself. As the tendency was of course to impair a confidence in you which he had always cherished, he had evidently determined to investigate the affair thoroughly for his own satisfaction, and for the ends of pure justice. He did not appear to me to have gone into the inquiry with any foregone conclusion, or with any partisan aim. I was strongly impressed that his grand purpose was to *establish the truth*, on which soever side it lay. That he may possibly have mistaken the import of some facts or expressions, may be admitted on the ground of human fallibility; but that he intended to conduct the investigation in the most upright and impartial manner, and that all his statements were according to his most solemn convictions of truth, I have not the shadow of a doubt. Indeed, it has seldom been my lot to meet a man who combined in his character more of a rigid and Roman integrity of purpose, with more of a gentle and pleasing deportment in his ordinary intercourse with men.

Very truly, Yours, &c.,

GEORGE BUSH.

Now, how the General Convention, with such testimonials as these before it—and the Convention was in possession of *all* this at its last session—could render a verdict directly in the face of the sworn testimony of Mr. Miller, and one which virtually adjudges him to have been guilty of perjury, it is not easy to conceive, unless there be something radically wrong—some terrible prejudice, or some deep corruption *somewhere* in that body.

Being prevented, by sickness in my family, from attending the Convention in 1855, and learning that Mr. Wilks intended, at that meeting, to make application for membership, I wrote the President of the Convention, and sent him at the same time copies of the two letters from Mr. Miller (Nos. I. and V. pp. 11, 19) upon which I based my charge of calumny. I here give some extracts from my letter to the President, enough to show how strong and earnest was my protest against his being admitted a member of the Convention (which Mr. Worcester considers a "Church in larger form") until the matter complained of was

set right. My letter was long, and I omit, therefore, for the sake of brevity, such portions as seem unimportant.

(IX.)

BROOKLYN, June 22, 1855.

Rev. THOMAS WORCESTER, }
Boston, Mass. }

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Along with this I send you copies of two letters, which I received from Thomas S. Miller of New York, just after my removal from that city to Cincinnati. The letters tell their own story. After an intimate acquaintance of more than seven years with Mr. Miller, I can say that I never knew a man more scrupulously honest, conscientious and truthful than he. I never heard but one individual question his truthfulness in the slightest degree, and that could easily be accounted for, without impugning Mr. Miller's veracity—a personal difficulty having existed between them.

Then, in addition to Mr. Miller's statements, I have the testimony of other honest, impartial, well-known New Churchmen, to their correctness in every important particular. Mr. J. L. Moffat states to me that Mr. Miller has correctly reported the conversation had with him, and that he received from Mr. Wilks (and from Mr. Allen, to whom Mr. W. first made his statement) the same unfavorable impression in regard to my conduct in the transaction referred to, which Mr. Miller received:—That he understood Mr. Wilks, as Mr. Miller understood him. Mr. Samuel L. Waldo remembers that Mr. Wilks' statement, as reported to me by Mr. Miller in letter, marked (No. I.), was read twice to Mr. W. by Mr. M., to see if it was correct; and that Mr. Wilks did affirm its substantial correctness; also that the questions and answers occurred substantially as reported in letter (No. II.), to the best of his recollection—Mr. Miller having written down the substance of that conversation immediately after it occurred, and read it to Mr. Waldo the next day, while it was fresh in both their memories.

This is *some* of the evidence of the substantial truth of all that Mr. Miller wrote me in the letters, of which copies are herewith transmitted.

Then, after stating that I had pursued a course in accordance with the President's advice, the year previous—that I had "been to Mr. Wilks, and told him of his fault, first, between him and me alone, and second, in company with another brother, Mr. Samuel L. Waldo," but that I was "very sorry to say, that neither interview was at all satisfactory—nay, worse than this—that I came away both times with a less favorable opinion of his honesty and truthfulness, than I had when I went"—I closed with the following paragraph:

And now let me say, that the question here involved, is not a question of *cloth*, as one speaker, who was apparently seeking to be witty, said in Conven-

tion a year ago. . It is one of greater magnitude, and of far greater interest. It is whether a minister of the New Church shall be permitted to slander a brother minister in a most outrageous and cruel manner, and afterwards, without having made any attempt at redress, or any acknowledgment even, and seeking to cloak his first great wrong by further falsehoods, shall be received into the bosom, or elected to offices of dignity, in a body which claims to be pre-eminently the Church of the Lord.

I am aware of the disadvantage of my position, growing out of the strong prejudice against me which unfortunately exists in the minds of some of the leading men in the Convention, and their consequent predisposition to take sides with any one who will speak ill of me. But I appeal to you, my brother—not as my friend, for I have no reason to believe that you feel very friendly towards me—but as a man and a christian, as a lover of justice and order, as the presiding officer of the General Convention, and as one to whom many look with confidence for wise counsel, just judgment and prudent action, to exert your influence to prevent Mr. Wilks from coming into, or holding any office under, the General Convention, until the matter complained of shall have been amicably arranged, or Mr. Wilks acquitted of all wrong in the premises, by a competent and impartial tribunal. I do not ask—I do not expect you to do this on my account, but from a regard to the honor of the body over which you preside, and the best welfare of the Church, which I believe you love.

Yours truly,

B. F. BARRETT.

And a few hours after this letter was sent, the mail brought me from California, Mr. Miller's affidavit, (see page 20). And I immediately dispatched another note to the President of the Convention, stating this fact, and closing with this plain and emphatic language :

"If the General Convention receives him, (Mr. Wilks) into fellowship, or allows him to *hold any office* in its gift, [considering the evidence with which it was then furnished,] I am sure it will bring upon itself a disgrace from which it cannot recover for many long years. However little regard the Convention may have for me or my protest in this matter, I hope, at least, it will have some regard for its own dignity and welfare, and for that course of conduct which the laws of Christian charity, not less than the true principles of church government, obviously require."

But notwithstanding all this, and the evidence against Mr. W. furnished by Mr. Miller's letters (Nos. I. & V.) of which I had forwarded copies to Mr. Worcester, Mr. Wilks was admitted a member of the Convention, and Mr. Barrett consequently was adjudged guilty of bringing a false accusation against a brother, whose "innocence," say the Convention, "Mr. W. has satisfactorily established." Immediately after the adjournment of the Convention, the following correspondence in re-

lation to this matter, took place between the President and myself. I publish it entire, and leave the reader to judge for himself, whether Mr. Worcester's evasive answer to my inquiry, *In what way shall I tell my offending brother's fault to the Church?* or rather, his advice to me, *not to tell it to the Church at all*, evinces a real belief on the part of the President of the Convention, in the binding authority of this text, (Matt. xviii. 17,) according to its literal sense, and the President's own profession. Mr. Worcester has always insisted strenuously upon the obligation of brethren in the New Church to observe this precept in the 18th chapter of Matth^{ew}, in its literal sense; and his advice to me in Portland, to go and see Mr. Wilks, first, between him and me alone, was based *professedly* upon his belief of the literal teaching of this portion of the Word. Yet, after I had conformed to the literal requirements of verses 15 and 16, but without being heard, and ask Mr. Worcester *in what way* I shall proceed to obey the command in verse 17th, "And if he shall neglect to hear them, *tell it unto the Church*," he tells me to stop where I am—not to think of obeying this part of the Lord's command at all. I submit whether we are not just as much bound to obey verse 17th in its literal sense in a case like the one now before us, as we are to obey the two preceding verses in that sense; and whether Mr. Worcester's advice in this instance is not proof, either that he does not, after all, really consider this precept binding in its literal sense, or if so, that he feels himself at liberty to advise the utter disregard and neglect of it, whenever his own wisdom shall suggest this course as most expedient. I am at a loss to understand, how that which is held as a *principle* of action, or which is regarded as a *divine command*, can be so easily set aside at the suggestion of *expediency*. Why may not *expediency*, or our own view of what is best under the circumstances, be taken as our rule of action always, if, in view of it, we may set aside, in a single instance, what we acknowledge to be a command of God? And if this be admitted, what shall hinder man's wisdom from soon rendering all the commandments of God of none effect? But let this correspondence speak for itself.

(No. X.)

BROOKLYN, JULY 2, 1855.

REV. THOMAS WORCESTER,

MY DEAR BROTHER:—I am informed by Mr. Beswick that Mr. Wilks was admitted a member of the General Convention last week, and that neither my letters to you, nor Mr. Miller's letters, of which I sent you copies, were read before the Convention.

My next and final step in regard to Mr. Wilks' great wrong, of which I have complained, is, I suppose, to "tell it to the Church." And I would thank

you to tell me in what way I shall proceed to do this; for I presume it will not be pretended, that, placing those letters in the hands of *three individuals*—one of whom has long been inimical to me, and was therefore disqualified for acting upon such a committee, and another of whom is known to be inimical to Mr. Miller, and for that reason disqualified in like manner—is telling the matter complained of *to the Church*. At any rate I should like to know how you view it, and what you think is the proper way of telling this offence of my brother “to the church.” For, having gone thus far in trying to do my duty, I am now disposed to persevere even unto the end.

Hoping to hear from you at your earliest convenience in reply to this, I remain,

Yours truly,

B. F. BARRETT.

(No. XI.)

Boston, July 3d, 1855.

DEAR BROTHER,

I have just received yours of yesterday. I had no opportunity to read your documents before they went to the Committee, for Mr. Beswick did not deliver them till after the Committee was appointed. Then I had only time to see that they related to the case before I handed them to the Committee. But if I had received them earlier, it would have made no difference, for the Convention would not have thought it proper to have such letters read before such an assembly.

You complain of the composition of the Committee—that one of them was inimical to you, and another inimical to Mr. Miller. I appointed the Committee, and I found it no easy thing to do; for over and over again, when I thought of any one as a particularly suitable person, it occurred to me that you had had some difficulty with him, and so I was obliged to look out for another. At length I fixed upon those whom I supposed you could not object to. Nor do I now believe that either of them was inimical to you.

You desire to know what I think you should do next. I think you had better not do anything until you have seen the report of the Committee; for in it you will see the words of men who do not desire to injure any one. You will see that they have been very considerate and tender in their expressions with respect to you. I hope you will conclude that the case has been submitted to impartial men, and that you will abide by their decision. I hope that you will also become fully reconciled to Mr. Wilks, and to the Convention. This is the course which, in my opinion, will be most beneficial to you and to the Church, and I do earnestly hope that you will not think of any other.

The plan which you propose, would certainly bring much disgrace upon the Church, and I am afraid that it would destroy you entirely.

I congratulate you upon the recent addition to your family. Please give my kind regards to Mrs. Barrett. I have been very glad to learn of the improvement in her health.

Very truly yours,

T. WORCESTER.

(No. XII.)

BROOKLYN, July 6th, 1855.

REV. THOS. WORCESTER,

DEAR BROTHER :—I have received yours of the 3d inst., but am sorry to say it does not answer my question so explicitly as I could wish. I consider the duty of telling an offending brother's fault to *the Church*, after he has refused to hear me, when told of it privately, and then in company with one or two witnesses, to be just as obligatory on me—because ~~by~~ by the same high authority—as the first two steps, which, in the present case, have already been taken. In respect to the *duty itself*, therefore, my mind is clear enough. On that point I need no advice. But in regard to the proper or best *mode of doing it*, I am not quite so clear. I should like, therefore, to have you answer me these questions, explicitly, if you have no objections :—1st. Do you think that handing the documents I sent you, to a committee of three, is *telling my brother's offence to the Church* ? 2nd. If not, will you be so kind as to tell me in what way you think I should proceed to tell it to the Church ? Of course I shall not do anything until I get the report of the Committee, and I have written to the Secretary to obtain a copy of that part of the Convention's proceedings. But you must have formed a strange opinion of my character, if you imagine that any “*expressions*” of the Committee, however “*considerate and tender*,” can satisfy me, so long as their *act* or *decision* is unjust, and tending to screen the guilty and condemn the guiltless. Sugar-plums may pacify a restless child, but a court who should seriously offer them to an injured man as a means of reconciling him to its iniquitous decision, would thereby add insult to injury. No, I want no *sugared words* in a matter of this sort ; but justice—*simple justice*, is all I ask. And in the present instance, it is not I who demand this, but the cause of truth, and of injured innocence.

From what Mr. Hayden tells me, I presume I was misinformed in regard to the names of the Committee referred to. I had been told that Mr. Scammon and Mr. John L. Jewett were two of them.

In speaking of the difficulty you found in appointing the Committee, you say : “*For over and over again, when I thought of any one as a particularly suitable person, it occurred to me that you had had some difficulty with him, and so was obliged to look out for another.*” Then, I can only say—and I beg you not to think that it is said in any unkindness—that you must have a strange and very untruthful class of spirits around you, which I earnestly hope you may be able soon to get rid of. For I declare to you, that, out of the large number who were at the Convention, I cannot think of more than three or four individuals in all, with whom I have ever had the least difficulty ; and of these, Mr. Wilks is one, Mr. Stewart of Urbana, is another, and Mr. John Allen is another. I have reasons for believing that Mr. Scammon has long felt towards me in a way that ought to disqualify him for serving on such a Committee ; and perhaps I might say the same of one or two members of your own Society.

You express a hope that I may become “*reconciled*” to the General Convention. Do you then regard every one who criticises fairly the acts of that body—who frankly points out its defects, its short-comings, and its mis-doings,

as an *enemy* of the Convention? If so, I think you commit a great mistake. And if the Convention looks upon me in the light of an enemy, it must be, I think, on account of the wrong which that Body is at least partially conscious of having done me; and your wiser course, therefore, would be, to urge the *Convention* to become reconciled to *Mr. Barrett*.

The position which I at present occupy in relation to that Body, is not one of my own seeking, as you very well know. It is one in which I have been placed solely through the instrumentality of others. I accept it cheerfully, as a providential circumstance, not doubting but the Lord has a purpose in it, and a duty for me to perform here, and humbly trusting that He will make that duty plain to me and give me the resolution to do it. What may be the consequence to myself personally, is a matter of small moment, and not worth your thought or mine.

In the last paragraph but one of your letter, you say:—"The plan which you propose would certainly bring much disgrace upon the church, and I am afraid that it would destroy you entirely." This is indeed extraordinary language to come from a man occupying your high position, and who regards, or *professes* to regard the instruction in the 18th chapter of *Matthew* as of binding obligation in its literal sense. "The plan which I propose," is, to act fully up to this instruction—to do my *whole* duty as therein pointed out, by proceeding next to tell the offence of my brother to the Church. This is *all* that I now propose to do. And what am I to think of your *principles*, or how can you expect me to believe that you really *have* any principles, when you allow yourself seriously to speak of *this* "plan" in the manner you have. I would fain believe, my brother, that you have suffered yourself to speak inadvertently, or without due deliberation in this instance, or that quite a different meaning is concealed beneath your words, from the one which is obvious to ordinary minds. You will, I trust, excuse my plainness of speech; for the times as well as the occasion, seem to me to demand plain speaking.

Awaiting your answer to my questions, I remain,

Yours truly,

B. F. BARRETT.

(No. XIII.)

DEAR BROTHER,

July 9th, 1855.

I have just received yours of the 6th inst. I do not see that your duty requires you to go any farther in the same direction; but if you could be persuaded to go a few steps in the opposite direction, I think it would be of immense use to you.

Yours truly,

THOMAS WORCESTER.

After this correspondence, being left to determine for myself on the proper way of telling the offence complained of "to the church," I at first determined to tell it through the press—to print and circulate among my New Church brethren the facts and the evidence in the case. But upon further reflection, I determined to carry the matter to the next meeting of the Convention, and see whether that body would allow

this brother's offence, together with the evidence of it, to be told to it; or whether it would *practically*, as its President had already done by his advice, repudiate one of its own acknowledged and *fundamental* rules of discipline, as laid down in the preamble to its Constitution, (*see Journal for 1856, p. 55*). Accordingly I waited till the next meeting of the Convention in 1856, and then addressed to that body the following memorial.

TO THE GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE NEW CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

It is known to some of your body, that at the meeting of the Convention in Portland two years ago, the name of the Rev. Thomas Wilks was reported by the Executive Committee as one whom they had thought proper to appoint Assistant Editor of the Boston N. J. Magazine, although Mr. Wilks, up to that time, had not been received into the Convention. It is also known, that, on the reading of the Report of that Committee, I moved in Convention that the Rev. Thomas Wilks' name be stricken from the list of officers appointed by them "*on the ground that he was not a member of the Convention.*" And I was not then, nor am I now, aware that any person not connected with the Convention had ever before been appointed to office in this Body, if there was one solitary voice opposed to his appointment. Nevertheless my motion to have Mr. Wilks' name stricken out upon this ground, met with strong opposition. And when it became evident that the motion, if pressed to a vote, would be lost, I stated, with much reluctance, but from a solemn sense of duty, that I had other and still stronger reasons for urging the omission of this name; but that I preferred not to give those reasons to the Convention at that time—that I deemed it most wise, kind and charitable not to do so;—that I was quite willing however, to state them fully and frankly to the Executive Committee, or to any other Committee that the Convention might be pleased to appoint. But the retention of Mr. Wilks in the office to which the Ex. Committee had appointed him, was still insisted on, and it was even thought to be uncharitable in me, that I had declared my strongest reasons for objecting to his premature if not disorderly appointment, to be such as I would prefer not to give to the whole Convention. And after hearing my course characterized in a manner which I am sure it deserved not to be, I felt constrained to add, that, as I disliked innuendoes, and liked plain speaking probably as much as any of my brethren, I would say that my strongest reasons for objecting to Mr. Wilks being appointed to any office in this Convention, was that he had been guilty of a grave misdemeanor—a cruel slander—and one which had never been retracted nor acknowledged,—I have felt myself here called upon to state thus much, in order that my brethren, who were not present at the Convention in Portland, may see under what circumstances or constraining influences I made the statement that I did. But it was unanimously agreed (and I heartily concurred in the vote) that nothing which had been said or done in relation to this matter in that Convention, should be suffered to appear upon the Journal.

But Mr. Wilks was still continued in the office to which the Executive Com-

mittee had appointed him :*—and at the last Convention,—which, owing to sickness in my family, I was prevented from attending,—Mr. W. applied for admission into this body ; accompanying his application with the request that certain statements affecting his private character, and made by the Rev. B. F. Barrett at the previous meeting of the Convention, might be investigated “ in an impartial and careful manner,” and “ that the result of the investigation be made as public as the charge had been.” Whereupon a Committee of three *laymen* was appointed by the President to investigate the matter ; which, as only one of the parties was present, and witnesses were called only on *one* side, could not, one would naturally suppose, have been investigated very impartially or very thoroughly. It is not, therefore, a matter of very great surprise, under all the circumstances of the case, that this Committee should have arrived at the conclusion, that Mr. Barrett, “ under the influence of a mistaken impression,” had “ *erroneously* charged Mr. Wilks with injuring his character ;” that Mr. Wilks had “ satisfactorily established his innocence ;” and that there had been, on Mr. Barrett’s part, “ a want of conformity to true order, in not seeking to be guided by the divine law ” in settling this difficulty “ at first.” Now, however natural—and a thing to be expected, under all the circumstances—might have been this conclusion of the Committee, I am well satisfied that they would have come to quite a different conclusion, had they been in possession of all the facts and evidence in the case, and had these been duly considered. Heartily concurring, therefore, as I do, in the request of Mr. Wilks, in his memorial to the Convention of last year, that this matter be investigated “ in an impartial and careful manner, in order that the truth concerning the unpleasant affair may be satisfactorily arrived at ;” and having myself, without any satisfactory result, taken the first two steps required by the law of charity applicable to such cases, as that law is understood and interpreted by this Convention ; and Mr. Wilks having been admitted a member of this body, contrary to my earnest protest,—I now appear before you, brethren, and respectfully ask that you appoint an early hour, when I may tell to you the fault of my offending brother, and lay before you the evidence which I am prepared to offer. And I further ask, respectfully, that the same publicity be given to this memorial, and the conclusions to which it may lead, as was given to that of Mr. Wilks a year ago.

And let me add, that, in what I am now asking and doing, I am not conscious of being actuated by any uncharitable feelings or wrong motives ; but I can and do declare, with truth and sincerity, that I should rejoice from the bottom of my heart to see Mr. Wilks’ innocence of the offence alleged “ satisfactorily established.” But as I confess myself wholly unable to see this at

* It is worthy of mention here, that the Convention’s Committee on the Journal garbled this memorial in a very reprehensible manner, without any authority from the Convention, or myself. They omitted, in publishing, just about one half of it—all the first half—all proceeding this *asterisk*—which explains the reason of my penning such a memorial, and shows how this matter was first introduced into the Convention.

present, in the light of the evidence now in my possession, I earnestly and affectionately solicit the aid of my brethren in helping me to see it.

Respectfully submitted,

B. F. BARRETT.

As soon as I began reading the above memorial to the Convention, one of the most prominent and influential members of that body endeavored to stop me; but finally consented to let the memorial be read. But the Convention were unanimous in refusing to grant my petition. Not an individual moved that an hour be appointed, or that an opportunity be given during the session, for Mr. Barrett to tell to that body (which assumes to be "the General Church of the country") the fault of his offending brother. And this, too, notwithstanding they were assured by Mr. Barrett that he asked permission to do this, in obedience to the Convention's own fundamental rule of discipline, and its own understanding of Matt. xviii. 17. The Convention, by incorporating this rule of discipline into the preamble of its Constitution, clearly contemplates the *possibility* of cases like the one I brought; but as soon as a case arises, and the aggrieved party proceeds exactly according to the acknowledged rule, and respectfully asks permission to "tell it to the Church," he is not allowed to do any such thing. I submit whether the refusal of the Convention to grant the petition in my memorial, does not prove, either that this Body bows obsequiously to the opinions and authority of one man, or at most a very few men, or that it does not really believe this precept in Matthew to be of binding authority in its literal sense, or else that it is not ashamed to act directly contrary to its own principles.

When I saw that I was not to be allowed to tell this matter to the Convention, I urged the propriety of its being submitted to the *Committee of ministers*, since it was a difficulty between ministers. This, also, was peremptorily refused, contrary to all established ecclesiastical usage. But a *packed committee* of five was appointed, three of whom were *laymen*, and to this committee I was permitted to tell my offending brother's fault. Willing to err on the side of too great condescension, if, perchance, I might see Mr. Wilks' innocence "satisfactorily established," I went before this Committee, in company with Mr. Wilks, and presented to them in as lucid a manner as I could, the testimony I have here offered—and something more. And not one syllable of rebutting testimony was offered—not a syllable. Mr. Wilks, however, flatly denied the statements made and sworn to by Mr. Miller, and corroborated by the testimony of Mr. Waldo and others; and the Committee accept this denial—a denial by the *accused individual himself* of the truth of

the testimony against him, and make up their report accordingly! Thus they allow the unsubstantiated and most improbable statements of the *accused party*, to outweigh not only a great amount of internal evidence to the contrary, but the solemn and harmonious testimony of disinterested parties—of men as scrupulously honest, just and truthful as can be found in the land! Who ever heard of such wanton disregard of all the laws of evidence by sensible men called to arbitrate a question of this kind? I never did; and I can account for it in this instance, only by attributing it to the somewhat natural and obviously strong desire on the part of that Committee to shield *at all hazards* the party[†] whom they knew sympathized most cordially with the order and policy of the General Convention. But did that Committee consider, I wonder, how great an outrage it was against every law of charity and every principle of justice, to render a verdict entirely contrary to the *evidence* in the case—a verdict which virtually charges three excellent men of unimpeachable veracity, with bearing false witness, and adjudges one of them to have been guilty of *perjury*. And this, too, *without one syllable* of testimony to sustain this verdict—upon the mere naked, unsubstantiated and inconsistent statements of the accused himself! What would be thought of one of our civil courts, if, in the case of a man charged with robbery or arson, and proved guilty by the unimpeached and unimpeachable testimony of three or more witnesses, it should receive the naked assertions of the accused himself, and allow *his* testimony in his own behalf to outweigh and overthrow that of all the impartial witnesses? Let such a mode of judicial procedure be pursued in our courts, and crime would in all cases escape unpunished. Yet this was precisely the course pursued by this *ecclesiastical* (?) court, in the case before us.

The following is the conclusion of this Committee's report as published in the Convention's Journal for 1856, and embodies all that is of any importance here. The history of this matter, which they undertake to give in the first part of their report will be found more fully and correctly given on pp. 13–17 of this pamphlet, in my letter to Mr. Miller, whose truth, when read before the Committee, Mr. Wilks himself did not pretend to deny in any important particular.

"After Mr. Barrett left New York, to preach at Cincinnati, a report became current in the former city to the effect that Mr. Barrett had received cloth for a coat from some one, for Mr. Wilks, and then had taken pay for it from Mr. Wilks. This, of course, was making Mr. Barrett guilty of a very base transaction. The main difficulty of Mr. Barrett with Mr. Wilks was based upon the supposition, and appearance to him, that Mr. Wilks originated

the slander. Mr. Wilks disclaims having done it. He says that such a charge against Mr. Barrett is a calumny; and he much regrets, that, at the time the report was in circulation in New York, he did not so understand the position of affairs as to feel that he was called upon to give his decided testimony to the strictly honorable dealing of Mr. Barrett in the affair in question.

"Your Committee present this statement as due to the Convention, in order that they may have correct views of a transaction which has been vaguely and imperfectly brought to their notice, and in justice to the two gentlemen concerned.

"We could wish that they might have and see sufficient grounds for reconciliation,—a settlement of the difficulty between them. We have endeavored to give them such friendly aid as was in our power towards this end; and we pray that they may be able to do as He would wish to have them, who says, 'If thy brother sin against thee, rebuke him; and, if he repent, forgive him; and if he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn to thee again, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him;'—who says, 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven;'—and who says, 'With the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.'"

"The Committee submit the following resolutions, as expressive of their views.

Resolved: First, That, in the opinion of the Convention, the circumstances of the case were sufficient to justify Mr. Barrett in demanding an investigation.

Resolved: Second, That the explanations given and regrets expressed by Mr. Wilks ought to be received as satisfactory by the Convention."

And this report was accepted, and the resolutions appended thereto were unanimously adopted by the Convention—under protest, however, by Mr. Barrett, as contrary to truth and the evidence in the case.

The "*circumstances*" which the Committee here say "were sufficient to justify Mr. Barrett in demanding an investigation," were circumstances which convinced me that Mr. Wilks was guilty of the alleged calumny. And there was not a syllable of testimony presented to invalidate the force of these "*circumstances*," or to change their aspect in the slightest degree. Not a single new fact, or new phase of old facts, was elicited by the "*investigation*." If, then, I was justified "*in demanding an investigation*," I am justified by the same "*circumstances*" in still believing Mr. Wilks guilty of the calumny alleged, since nothing which I did not know before was brought to my knowledge by this investigation—nothing to change the aspect or weaken the force of the "*circumstances*" referred to.

And as to Mr. Wilks' "*explanations*," they were no explanations to me; for, besides being unreasonable, they were inconsistent with themselves, and with known and admitted facts, and in direct conflict

with the agreeing testimony of unimpeachable witnesses. And if Mr. Wilks "expressed" any "regrets" at anything he had done, it certainly was not in my presence. And if he expressed them to the Committee in my absence, was it not proper, if they were seeking, as they *professed to be, a reconciliation*, that I should have been informed of the nature of those "regrets." He insisted perpetually that he had done nothing wrong—had uttered no calumny against Mr. Barrett. What, then, had he to *regret*? He did, indeed, say that, *if* he had done anything out of the way (persisting at the same time that he had *not*) he was sorry for it. Was this making any acknowledgment, or expressing any regret? Mr. Wm. J. Parsons, who spoke so earnestly in the Convention in Mr. Wilks' behalf, said he thought this ought to be satisfactory to Mr. Barrett. If a man, charged with robbing Mr. Parsons' house, and proved guilty by the best of testimony, should say, while solemnly protesting his innocence, that *if* he committed the robbery, he was sorry for it, would that be satisfactory to Mr. P.? If so, he is less wise than our laws. Mr. Wilks, say the Committee, "much regrets, that, at the time the report was in circulation in New York, he did not so understand the position of affairs," &c. But the testimony is overwhelming that he *did fully* understand "the position of affairs," &c. And *who set the report in circulation*? Who, according to the testimony, *but Mr. Wilks himself*? Mr. Allen, it is said, declares that the calumny originated with him. It may be very kind and friendly on the part of Mr. Allen to assume such a responsibility, but has the declaration an air of probability? And if so, how, in view of Mr. Miller's and Mr. Waldo's testimony, does this relieve Mr. Wilks? Can any one see how?

The Committee at Philadelphia, together with Mr. Wilks and myself, were in session about four hours. And then they requested Mr. W. and Mr. B. to retire, that they might be in freedom to talk the matter over, and make up their verdict from what had been presented. We did retire. Both of us went into the body of the Temple where the Convention was in session, leaving the Committee in the basement. And in about five minutes thereafter, one of the Committee (Mr. Charles S. Close) came into the Temple and invited Mr. Wilks to go out with him. Mr. W. went immediately out with Mr. C., and was absent just thirty minutes by my watch—and came in alone. In five minutes after he entered the Temple, the Committee came in with their report. As soon as the report was read, I rose in my seat and respectfully asked leave to put a single question to the Chairman of that Committee. The President would not give me leave, but said the Convention might if it thought proper. A number of voices immediately shouted, "No—no,—no."

And not an individual in that whole assembly had the courage, or the manliness, or the sense of justice and propriety, to move that Mr. Barrett have leave to put the question! And as there was no motion, of course no formal vote was taken; and I sat down. The single question which I wished to propound, was, "*For what purpose* was Mr. Wilks summoned again before the Committee, and privately closeted with them for a full half hour, *after* they had requested us both to retire?" And I desired to ask this question, and to have it answered in the presence of the whole Convention, that all might see what an *impartial* course that Committee had pursued. One of the Committee, when this question was put to him after adjournment, answered, "The Committee wanted to get some *concessions* from Mr. Wilks: That was why they sent for him. And they *did* get some." Was it not due to Mr. Barrett, as the aggrieved party, that *he* should have been informed of the nature of those concessions, or that it should have been stated in the report? Was it right for the Committee to regard no one but Mr. Wilks? And to endeavor, in fixing up their report, to approach as near the line of justice as Mr. W. would allow them? Let others decide.

Soon after my return from the Convention, I addressed to Mr. Charles S. Close, of Philadelphia (the member who came and called Mr. Wilks out of the Temple on the occasion referred to), the following note:—

(No. XIV.)

ORANGE, June 14, 1856.

MR. CHARLES S. CLOSE,

MY DEAR SIR,—Will you please inform me for what purpose the Committee on my memorial in relation to Mr. Wilks, of which you were a member, summoned Mr. W. to appear before them immediately after they had requested us both to retire. It would be gratifying to me to know precisely what the Committee desired Mr. Wilks to do or say, and what he *did* say; and what effect, if any, the statements received from him in that private interview had upon the Committee's report. Your early answer to this inquiry is respectfully solicited by

Yours truly,

B. F. BARRETT.

The following is Mr. Close's answer.

(No. XV.)

PHILADELPHIA, June 17th, 1856.

DEAR SIR:

In answer to your note of the 14th,—The Committee did not summon Mr. Wilks to appear before them after your being requested to retire. The Committee desired Mr. Wilks to say or do nothing that I know of. "What effect the statement received from him in that *private* interview" was, I cannot

answer. I know of no such interview with said Committee, nor was I present at the conversation with the person whom I called Mr. Wilks out of the church to see. The report of the Committee was written and signed by all the members, before the meeting of that morning took place, and there was no word altered, none inserted, none stricken out, not an i dotted, nor t crossed afterwards that I know of. Yours truly,

CHARLES S. CLOSE,

B. F. BARRETT, Esq.,
Orange, N. J.

Reed St., East of 4th St.

In this reply, it will be observed that Mr. Close denies *point blank*, that Mr. Wilks was summoned before the Committee *after* we had both been requested to retire. Mr. Close "knows of no such interview with said Committee," as I referred to. Mr. Wilks was called out of the Church to see *somebody* else, not the Committee; and Mr. C. "was not present at the conversation with *the person*." And as Mr. Close was the gentleman who invited Mr. Wilks out, who should know better than he, where and for what purpose he was summoned. But the most singular thing about all this is, that all the other members of that Committee, (for I addressed the very same inquiry to each of them) should have agreed in stating *the exact opposite* of what Mr. Close says. They say that Mr. Wilks *was* summoned before them after we had both been requested to retire; and state for what purpose he was sent for. Thus Dr. Towle, under date of June 19th, says to me.

"In answer to your inquiries, I have to say, that, after you and Mr. Wilks had retired from the Committee, a question arose as to the reply that Mr. W. had given to the inquiry, 'Why he did not correct and put down the story in question, when it came to his knowledge that it had assumed a character which did injustice to you, and conveyed a false impression to the public?' This, according to my recollection, was the only point in the case, spoken of or considered during the time to which you allude."

And Mr. Hinkly, in his reply, under date of June 18th, 1856, says: "The sole object of our having Mr. Wilks before the Committee *again*, after we had requested you both to retire, was, to ask from him some further explanation in regard to his not having taken active measures to put a stop to a rumor injurious to your character, even though he was not responsible for it."*

* It will be seen from this, as well as from the extract from Dr. Towle's letter, that the Committee *assumed*, on Mr. Wilks' naked declaration, and in opposition to the best of testimony, that he was not the *originator* of the calumny. Hence the diffi-

And with this, agree in substance the Rev. Messrs. Pettee, and Storey. Singular, and sad too, that these four gentlemen should *fib* so about this little matter, and yet *agree* so nearly ; for no one can deny that Mr. Close, who was the gentleman that called Mr. Wilks out of the Church, must have known better than any body else, *who* sent for him, and *where* he was during that half hour. And Mr. C. declares that he was *not* summoned before the Committee, and had no interview with them ; but was called out by him to converse with some one—stranger, of course, as Mr. C. “was not present at the conversation.” According to the principle upon which this Committee have proceeded in making up their verdict in this case, we are bound to accept Mr. Close’s positive denial of any interview between Mr. Wilks and the Committee, instead of the united testimony of the other gentlemen to the contrary.

Such is a brief history of this unpleasant affair from beginning to end—a history which I never should have thought of placing on record, had not the General Convention, by its unreasonable course in this matter, and its erroneous and unjust reports, clearly made it my duty to do so. I doubt whether so extraordinary an ecclesiastical proceeding was ever before recorded or even heard of.

It was said in open Convention at Philadelphia, that this was a *disgraceful* affair ; and said, too, in such a manner, as to produce the impression that the chief disgrace of it rested upon Mr. Barrett. With equal justice might it be said that *disgrace* attaches to the man who pursues the midnight assassin, and braves difficulty and danger for the sake of seeing justice executed upon the offender. Undoubtedly all vile and criminal conduct is disgraceful. But *on whom* does the disgrace rest ? On the innocent sufferers from such conduct, or on the evil doers ? I have yet to learn that any disgrace really attaches to him who honestly endeavors to ferret out offenders, and to have inflicted on them the punishment which their deeds deserve. Much less is it disgraceful for an innocent man, when an organized body seeks to injure

culty they found in understanding why he did not “take active measures to put a stop to a rumor,” the falsity of which *he alone* knew all about. He says, (and the Committee believe him) that the reason he did not, was, because “he did not understand the position of affairs,” &c. ! There would have been no embarrassing question here, had the Committee regarded the *evidence* in the case as more reliable than the declaration of the accused. The explanation would then have been easy ; for a man does not usually “take active measures to put a stop to a rumor,” which is well known to have originated with himself.

or oppress him, to avail himself of all proper and legitimate methods of self defence. Let the candid reader, in view of the facts and evidence here presented, judge whether this affair be most disgraceful to Mr. Barrett, or to Mr. Wilks and the General Convention. When I consider the frailties of our common humanity, and how liable we all are to act rashly at times, especially when anything occurs which deeply excites our feelings, I am rather surprised that I have been enabled, throughout this trying affair, to act as wisely and considerately as I have. I really do not see wherein I have offended against any law of christian charity, or failed to do my whole duty in this case. If others see, I trust they will kindly point it out to me.

It is said to be making a great fuss about a very little matter—a little bit of *cloth*. And is it *possible* that any New Churchman can look at the *cloth*, and overlook the momentous question of moral delinquency here involved? This ought to show us how exceedingly low and grovelling our minds are. Suppose a man should steal from you a pair of old shoes; and afterwards, to escape detection, should return and plunge a dagger to your heart and set fire to your dwelling. The whole neighborhood would be boiling over with excitement and rage. And what man in his senses, would think of saying that all this uproar was about a bit of *old leather*? The *leather* in the case would not be thought of even by the veriest dolt; so immeasurably would the crime of murder and arson outweigh all other considerations. And so in the case before us. What man of any moral perceptions, in view of the enormity of the offence complained of, could talk or think about *cloth*?

There have been other calumnies as gross and cruel as this circulated in the New Church—some of them in ways past finding out. It is seldom known *how* they get into being, or who sets them on foot. Still the envenomed shafts are kept flying. I think it becomes all those who are really praying for the peace of Jerusalem, to unite their voices in one loud chorus of reprobation of these things. While so great and crying an evil as this is tolerated, winked at, excused, or covered up, by respectable men, and the offenders even *rewarded* by the largest organized body of the Church by being placed in office and kept in office, multitudes will look upon it as quite a venial offence, or, indeed, as no offence at all; and this dreadful canker will remain, and increase in virulence. It is not those who seek to expose this iniquity to the public gaze, but those who seek to palliate or hide it, that merit the reprobation of honest men. It was the duty of the General Convention to have rendered such a verdict in the case presented, as should have en-

couraged and strengthened the hearts of those who mourn over the prevalence of this sin. But the unrighteous decision it has rendered—one in such direct conflict with the facts and the evidence—so long as it remains unreversed, will stand as a monument of the judicial blindness or incapacity of the Convention ;—nay, worse, a monument proclaiming its unblushing alliance with, if not connivance at, an evil which has afflicted the New Church in our country to a lamentable extent.

That this exposure (which has been made most reluctantly, notwithstanding my duty was so plain) may do something to call the serious attention of my brethren to this great evil, and to arrest its further progress, is the devout wish of one who has suffered repeatedly and in silence from the foul breath of slander, and who breaks silence now by no means on his own account.



